

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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USCINCEUR, USAREUR, USAFE FOR POLADS

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, GW
SUBJECT: SAARLAND COALITION AGREEMENT REACHED BETWEEN CDU
AND FDP

REF : 76 FRANKFURT 8878

1. AFTER MUCH HARD BARGAINING THE CDU AND FDP REACHED AGREEMENT
ON A COALITION GOVERNMENT IN THE SAAR ON FEBRUARY 23.
THE ONLY HURDLE STILL TO BE OVERCOME IS APPROVAL
OF THE AGREEMENT BY THE FDP LAND CENTRAL COMMITTEE
WHICH IS NOW SCHEDULED TO ACT ON SATURDAY,
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FEBRUARY 26. IF THE COMMITTEE APPROVES--WHICH IS
LIKELY BUT NOT RPT NOT CERTAIN--THE NEW SAARLAND
GOVERNMENT WILL BE PRESENTED TO THE LANDTAG IN
SAARBRUECKEN ON MARCH 1, THUS ENDING 22 MONTHS IN
WHICH THE CDU GOVERNED WITHOUT A MAJORITY.

2. UNDER THE TERMS OF THE AGREEMENT FDP CHAIRMAN

WERNER KLUMPP BECOMES MINISTER OF ECONOMICS, TRANSPORT AND AGRICULTURE AND ALSO DEPUTY MINISTER-PRESIDENT (NOTE: THE ECONOMICS PORTFOLIO HAD BEEN HELD BY MINISTER-PRESIDENT ROEDER SINCE EARLY DECEMBER 1976 WHEN THE CDU INCUMBENT RESIGNED). THE CURRENT MINISTRY FOR FAMILY, PUBLIC HEALTH AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS WILL BE SPLIT WITH RITA WASHBUESCH (CDU) REMAINING AS MINISTER FOR YOUTH AND FAMILY AFFAIRS WHILE THE FDP'S ROSEMARIE SCHEURLEN BECOMES MINISTER FOR LABOR, HEALTH AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS. THIS SOLUTION IS A MINOR VICTORY FOR THE CDU WHICH HUNG TOUGH AGAINST KLUMPP'S DEMAND THAT THE MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR BE GIVEN TO THE FDP.

3. THE COALITION AGREEMENT IS VALID UNTIL NEW LANDTAG ELECTIONS ARE HELD IN THE SAARLAND IN THE FIRST HALF OF CY 1980, A POINT WHICH HAS BEEN STRONGLY EMPHASIZED BY LUMPP WHO HAS INSISTED TO FDP SKEPTICS THAT THE ULTIMATE GOAL OF THE FDP REMAINS A COALITION WITH THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS. THE AGREEMENT PROVIDES SPECIFICALLY FOR FDP ACCEPTANCE OF ANY SUCCESSOR WHO MAY BE PROPOSED BY THE CDU TO FOLLOW ROEDER AS MINISTER-PRESIDENT WHEN THE LATTER STEPS DOWN TO MAKE ROOM FOR CDU LAND CHAIRMAN WERNER SCHERER, WHICH HE IS EXPECTED TO DO PERHAPS AFTER THE COMMUNAL ELECTIONS TO BE HELD IN SPRING 1979.

4. THE BUNDESRAT CLAUSE OF THE COALITION AGREEMENT TAKES FULL ADVANTAGE OF THE COMPLEXITIES OF THE GERMAN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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LANGUAGE TO SAY CIRCUITOUSLY AND IN MORE WORDS THAN NECESSARY FOR THE PURPOSE THAT THE SAARLAND WILL DECIDE ITS POSITION IN THE BUNDESRAT ON A CASE BY CASE BASIS. HOWEVER, THE LANGUAGE IS SUCH AS TO GIVE SAARBRUECKEN THE OPTION TO SUPPORT AN INCREASE IN THE VALUE ADDED TAX (MEHRWERTSTEUER) AND THE AGREEMENT ITSELF SPECIFICALLY STATES ELSEWHERE THAT THE SAARLAND WOULD VOTE FOR SUCH AN INCREASE IN THE BUNDESRAT IF ACCOMPANIED BY SOME RELIEF IN INCOME AND WAGE TAXES.

5. COMMENT: THE AGREEMENT IS A REASONABLE COMPROMISE BETWEEN THE CDU AND FDP. A CDU SPOKESMAN HAS DESCRIBED IT TO US AS SOMETHING BETTER THAN WHAT ALBRECHT ACCOMPLISHED FOR THE CDU IN LOWER SAXONY. THE FDP DID NOT GET THE INTERIOR MINISTRY AND GAVE A LITTLE MORE THAN IT RECEIVED IN A LABORIOUSLY WORKED OUT SECTION OF THE AGREEMENT DEALING WITH THE QUESTION OF RADICALS IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE.

ON THE OTHER HAND THE CDU AGREED TO DEFER UNTIL
1980 A REFORM IN THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM WHICH IT
STRONGLY DESIRED. KLUMPP HAS INSISTED ON KEEPING
THE FDP'S OPTIONS OPEN FOR THE 1980 LANDTAG
ELECTIONS WHICH WILL BE HELD NO LATER THAN MAY
1980 AND THUS WILL PRECEDE THE BUNDESTAG ELECTIONS
BY ABOUT FOUR TO FIVE MONTHS. APART FROM NATIONAL
LEVEL CONSIDERATIONS KLUMPP IS KNOWN TO BE ON GOOD
PERSONAL TERMS WITH SAARBRUECKEN'S YOUNG AND
AGGRESSIVE SPD LORD MAYOR OSKAR LAFONTAINE WHO IS
EXPECTED TO BE A FORMIDABLE AND DANGEROUS CHALLENGER
TO THE CDU IN THE 1980 ELECTIONS.LEHMANN

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